(b) if so, whether steps have already been initiated in all seriousness to implement this commitment;

(c) whether Government for the present intends to replace "education" with "literacy" and pursue total literacy programmes only like "SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN";

(d) whether the "SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN" scheme has really reached out so as to beneficially cover all the poor and deprived section of society; and

(e) if so, the appraisal of its performance so far, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Common Minimum Progamme of the Government pledges to raise public spending in education to at least 6% of GDP with at least half of this amount being spent on primary and secondary sectors. This will be done in a phased manner.

(c) and (e) Serva Shiksha Abhiyan is not a literacy programme but a National Programme for elementary education in partnership with the States, covering children in age group of 6-14 years. The Government of India has approved the Annual Work Plans of 597 districts of 33 States/UTs for implementation of SSA in 2004-2005. The Programme is being implemented by the States/UTs satisfactorily.

Universal Elementary Education

1232. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that not much progress has been made in achieving universal elementary education since the amended statute became effective;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) will be setting soft credit support of US dollar 550 million from the World Bank to meet part of the scheme cost of US dollar 3.5 billion;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that an estimated investment of just 78 paise for every Rs. 100 of GDP is required to ensure all out of school children to be brought into the system over the Tenth Five Year Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) No, Madam. After the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act regarding free and compulsory education was notified in December, 2002, central assistance of Rs. 2698.38 crores was released to States/UTs for implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which included, *inter alia* approval for opening of 67190 new schools, appointment of 398189 teachers, and construction of 40960 school buildings, 68779 classrooms, 46272 toilets and 33161 drinking water facilities.

(b) and (c) Tenth Plan allocation for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is Rs. 17,000 crores. World Bank has committed soft credit support of US $ 550 million for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan over a three-year period.

(d) the Tenth Plan Working Group on Elementary Education had estimated the total requirement of funds for universalisation of elementary education for the Tenth Plan Period to be Rs. 55,360 crores.

Universities in North-Eastern States

1233. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up Universities in some States in the North-Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the locations thereof; and

(c) whether Government will adopt the same policy towards the remaining States of the region facing exactly the same problems and difficulties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) In North- Eastern States, the Government has set up six Central Universities—two in Assam and one each in Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.

The Central Universities are established mainly in response to certain historical, cultural or consideration of Centre-State relations and to help remove regional imbalances.